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Rhetoric Towards Undocumented Mexican Immigrants in Idaho

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I. Introduction

Immigration to the United States continues to increase. With this growth, the cultural and ethnic demographic of the United States has become even more diverse. As a result, it is essential to understand the dynamic of Latinos in the United States and subsequently the State of Idaho. Additionally, it is imperative to examine the rhetoric that enables stereotypes and misguided attitudes towards Latinos. By answering the research question: “How does the Trump Administration’s rhetoric influence practices towards undocumented Mexican immigrants in Idaho?” this research project examines the rhetoric of the Trump administration and the influences of the rhetoric on Mexican immigration to Idaho.

Per the 2010 U.S. Census, there is an estimated 11.7 million Mexican immigrants living in the United States; from these 11.7 million, an estimated 6.1 million are undocumented (Kinefuchi & Cruz, 2015). By 2060, the population of the United States is projected to be 29% Hispanic (Colby & Ortman, 2015). In Idaho in 2014, the total Hispanic population was 198,000; this is about 12% of the overall state population (Demographic and Economic Profiles of Hispanics by State and County, 2014).



II. Methodology and Methods

Mixed methodology was utilized with both quantitative deductive and qualitative inductive approaches. Participants were purposefully selected for the qualitative interviews. All participants identified as residents of Idaho.

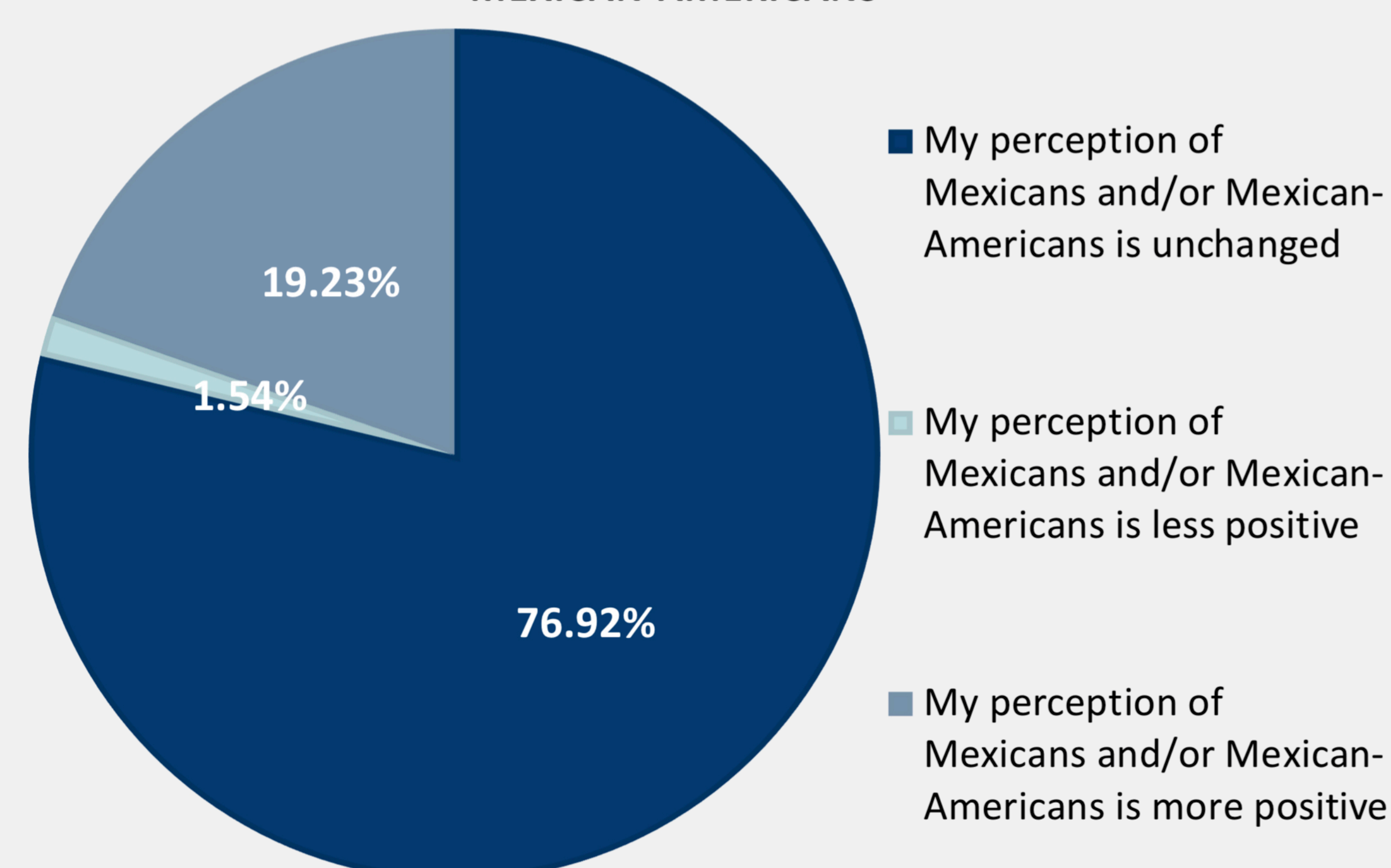
Quantitative

Quantitative deductive, close-ended surveys were collected anonymously using Qualtrics software. The survey was distributed via the researcher’s Facebook and Instagram social media platforms, as well as to the researcher’s university peers.

Qualitative

Qualitative inductive, open-ended, semi-structured interviews were held with eight participants. The researcher constructed interview questions and collected data from the eight participants in their natural environments.

IDAHOAN'S PERCEPTIONS TOWARDS MEXICANS AND/OR MEXICAN-AMERICANS



III. Results

The survey elicited 136 participant responses from the survey administered via Qualtrics. Of these participants, 90.84% responded that “yes” they were aware of comments made by President Trump regarding Mexico and Mexicans, 76.92% of participants responded that their “perception of Mexicans and/or Mexican-Americans is unchanged.” Only 1.54% of participants responded that their “perception of Mexicans and/or Mexican-Americans is less positive.”

Eight participant responses were gathered from in-person interviews. All participants stated that the rhetoric by President Trump and his administration does not adversely influence their perceptions of Mexicans and/or Mexican-Americans. Moreover, all participants stated that as a result of the Trump Administration’s rhetoric, they are driven to work harder to change undesirable narratives regarding Mexicans and Mexican-Americans in Idaho.

IV. Conclusions

Based on the data collected, there is opportunity to expand sample size. Outcomes reveal important trends that warrant further investigation. Findings indicate that the rhetoric employed by the Trump Administration, although at times appearing defamatory, has not had a weighty influence on practices and perceptions towards undocumented Mexicans in Idaho.



Research Question: How does the Trump Administration’s rhetoric influence practices towards undocumented Mexican immigrants in Idaho?